

President Biden has removed almost all of the policies protecting our border. Title 42 is the last one standing. Now, he is going to take this one down as well. Well, if he does, it will open the floodgates. I would expect tens of thousands more illegal immigrants coming into the country. It would create even more chaos from criminals all across the land—not just from Mexico, but from all across the world, coming across our southern border.

As a physician, I am concerned about this decision from the fentanyl standpoint and also from the standpoint of the disease, the coronavirus and the new variants we are all dealing with. We know that people are coming from all over the world.

When I was at the border this spring, at the Donna facility near McAllen, TX, the border agents said they had arrested people from more than 50 different countries coming across that southern border from Mexico into the United States.

Now, this includes lots of places where the vaccination rates are much, much lower than they are in the United States and in some places where vaccines aren't even available.

At the same time, we are seeing new variants of coronavirus rapidly spreading across the world; variants that are coming from other places; variants that are deadly; variants for which the vaccines that we have here in the United States may not be as effective as we had thought or as we would hope.

So the country's threat for all of us is real. Since the pandemic began, more than 8,000 Border Patrol agents and officers have tested positive for coronavirus, and 32 of these agents have died of coronavirus.

When I visited the border, I saw firsthand how unaccompanied children were routinely exposed to coronavirus. When I visited, roughly 1 in 10 of these young people who had tested, tested positive for coronavirus. And they were all together in these holding pens, crammed in like sardines, one exposing the other and the other after that. These holding facilities packed 7,000 young people into one facility the day we were there, and they have exposed everyone in the facility.

And, of course, after their time in the holding facility, they are released—many of them released while positive. So as new variants spread around the world, this puts our Nation in serious danger.

That is why Republican Senators are sending a letter to President Biden. Our message to President Biden is this: Leave the CDC protection under title 42 in place. The American people need it. We need it from a public health standpoint. It protects our public health. It protects our border agents. It strengthens our border security.

There is enough chaos at the border already—too many drugs, too many criminals, and they are already crossing the border. We need to stop this knee-jerk partisanship. And we need to

get back to the policies that we know work; the policies that the Border Patrol tells us work; the policies that the Border Patrol advised the Biden transition team, prior to Joe Biden's getting sworn in and inaugurated as President of the United States, to keep in place.

We need to finish the wall that has already been paid for. We need to bring back the Remain in Mexico policy. We need to enforce the law. We need to close the loopholes. We need to slam the door shut on the drug cartels. It is time to secure our border once and for all.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, every State of the Nation has many infrastructure needs. In Iowa, we rely on our roads, bridges, air, and freight to move our goods and people throughout Iowa, throughout the United States, and eventually throughout the world. I am encouraged that a bipartisan framework has been agreed to for moving forward on an infrastructure bill. I will be interested in seeing more details about the policy and the way to pay for the bill as the bill proceeds forward.

Today, I would like to discuss one aspect of infrastructure, and that is our inland waterways. For Iowa, that is the Mississippi and the Missouri Rivers. For other States, it is a lot of other important rivers.

I ask my colleagues to take this important mode of transportation into account as they work on legislation. I have also sent this request in a letter to both the Senate Environment and Public Works as well as the Appropriations Committees.

The inland and intercostal waterways and our ports are vital to the United States and serve 41 States throughout our Nation. Shippers and consumers depend on the ability to move around 630 million tons of cargo each year, valued at about \$232 billion on these waterways. In turn, the inland waterways system supports well over half a million jobs.

Now, I am going to go into some of the information that is on the chart here.

Our Nation's inland waterways system also provides a safe, cost-effective, fuel-efficient, and environmentally friendly way to move our bulk products. This translates into more than \$12 billion annually in transportation savings to the American economy.

Furthermore—and when I say “furthermore,” this point is important for the environment—1 gallon of fuel oil allows 1 ton of cargo to be shipped 647

miles by barge as compared to 477 miles by rail and only 145 miles by truck.

In addition, the inland waterway transport generates far fewer emissions of hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, and nitrous oxide than rail or truck per million tons of miles does.

As for safety, there are 21—let's say 22 rail fatalities compared to 79 truck fatalities for every 1 fatality on the waterways system that I am addressing.

By moving goods on inland waterways, we are helping to relieve congestion on the roadways and adding to the Nation's economic prosperity. Moving goods on inland waterways is the most efficient transportation mode. A typical inland barge has a capacity 15 times greater than 1 railcar and 60 times greater than 1 semi-trailer truck. One 15-barge tow can move the equivalent of 216 railcars pulled by 6 locomotives or 1,050 semi-trailer trucks, just as a comparison of the efficiency of this mode of transportation. If the cargo transported on the inland waterways each year had to be moved by another mode, it would take an additional 16 percent more tonnage on the railroad system and 49 million truck trips annually to carry the same load.

U.S. trade policy and its effects on exports, and in particular agricultural exports, have a major impact on the U.S. water transportation system.

The United States is the world's largest agricultural exporting country. U.S. agriculture exports in 2018—the last year we have figures for—generated more than \$300 billion in economic output and directly supported more than 1 million jobs.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, about one out of every three acres farmed in our country are planted for export. Agricultural exports account for about a quarter of farm cash receipts, in which 73 percent of these exports and 65 percent of imports were carried on U.S. waterways. American farmers need foreign markets to sell commodities and value-added agricultural products.

Compared to the overall economy, U.S. agriculture is twice as reliant on overseas markets. Consumers in developing countries around the world choose different foods to eat as their incomes rise. As a result, then, there are emerging opportunities for exporting more meat, dairy products, and farm commodities. U.S. exporters need to be able to take advantage of those opportunities with only 96 percent of the world's consumers living outside the United States. Obviously, for the 4 percent of the people who live in the United States, if you want to market, you are going to spend a lot of time marketing to that 96 percent who live outside our country.

As the largest exporter of agricultural products in the world, the United States delivers high-quality, reliable products to consumers around the globe. Now, here at home, these exports are essential to profitability in

agriculture, and the economic activity they generate obviously ripples through the domestic economy.

We need to make sure that our current inland waterway infrastructure is maintained in good condition. Congress has implemented policy changes that provide more funding for the Inland Waterways Trust Fund and adjusted cost shares of the trust fund to more efficiently fund and complete the construction projects. I ask for robust funding to support the use of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund for construction. This is necessary to ensure that the inland waterways modernization, replacement, and rehabilitation construction projects are funded at the level supportable by the Inland Waterways Trust Fund.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works program currently faces a large unmet need in its operations and maintenance account. I have been encouraged that in the last several years, Congress has provided additional funding to help address these backlogs. I request as much funding as possible be provided for these operation and maintenance activities.

The investigations account is also crucial for the inland waterways system. There are currently 15 modernization projects that are waiting to begin construction. It is critically important to complete design of these projects so they can begin construction when the Inland Waterways Trust Fund dollars become available. Failure to have design completed will delay project delivery, ultimately leading to increased total cost of the projects, as well as adding additional time to schedule project completion. I ask that the investigations account be funded at a level to support these projects, given current budgetary constraints.

On the Upper Mississippi River, multiple locks are well beyond their 50-year design life and cannot accommodate more tows, as we have to have the barges break up their tows to get them through smaller locks. So having to decouple the barges significantly slows down traffic on the river and increases costs and emissions harmful, then, to the environment.

I worked with my Upper Mississippi River colleagues here in the Senate and a large, broad stakeholder coalition to get initial authorization for this lock and dam modernization, the Navigation and Ecosystem Restoration Program, signed into law. We have also continued to work on receiving preconstruction engineering design and funding that is provided for in the Navigation and Ecosystem Restoration Program. It is important for that program to receive new start funding so construction on these improvements can start taking place.

Lock and Dam 25, which is a key feature of the navigation and ecosystem program, has received a significant portion of the \$72.5 million appropriated for the navigation and ecosystem program thus far and is ready

to move to construction. That program is a key priority for me and my colleagues, the State of Iowa, the region, and everybody up and down the Mississippi River, and, eventually, the world benefits from that increased efficiency.

We need all modes of transportation to help deliver our inputs, our goods, and commodities both domestically and internationally. I want to see robust navigation on the Mississippi River and other inland waterways flourish.

I look forward to continuing to work with my congressional colleagues and the administration on these important issues as appropriations and infrastructure legislation is prepared and discussed.

I have one other short comment I would like to make on another subject. It will take me about 2 or 3 minutes.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Mr. President, I have spoken many times about the importance of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. It should go without saying that these documents are foundational to our Nation. They were revolutionary texts for the time that laid out our timeless founding ideals, and we still continue to strive toward those ideals as Americans. Unfortunately, it seems this fact can't be taken for granted anymore.

So, on the Fourth of July, National Public Radio continued its tradition of sharing the text of the declaration, but something different happened this year. It began the program with what they call in colleges now a "trigger warning," telling its audience that "the declaration is a document with flaws and deeply ingrained hypocrisies."

Now, instead of highlighting the American ideals that it laid out, NPR decided that the most important thing to note was that it contained outdated language about Native Americans and that its ideals were not yet fully realized when it was written.

I can think of many ways to introduce a reader to this document, but it fundamentally misses the point to focus on the flaws of the authors and signers rather than the ideals it lays out of natural rights endowed to all by our Creator. The people who wrote the declaration were not perfect, just like we aren't perfect today, but the principles they espoused remain true to this day and have changed the course of human history for the better.

We need not ignore the fact that the Founders did not live up to the lofty goals that they set, but it does a great disservice to focus on those flaws while glossing over the fact that our founding principles were truly exceptional in human history. They set us on a path to abolish slavery, provide the justification for women's suffrage, and formed the basis of the civil rights movement.

On July 4, we celebrate our Nation, "conceived in liberty and dedicated to

the proposition that all men are created equal," as Abraham Lincoln so stated. It is imperative that we do not lose sight of our founding principles, which unite all Americans and have been the driving force helping us achieve a more perfect Union.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Arizona.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE

Ms. SINEMA. I ask that all remaining time be yielded back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the motion to discharge the nomination of Jennifer Ann Abruzzo from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Ms. SINEMA. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) would have voted "nay."

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 257 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—48

Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Blackburn	Grassley	Portman
Blunt	Hagerty	Risch
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Burr	Hoeven	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Cassidy	Inhofe	Sasse
Collins	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Shelby
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Marshall	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Ernst	Moran	Tuberville
Fischer	Murkowski	Wicker

NOT VOTING—2

Braun	Young
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The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The nomination is discharged, and it will be placed on the calendar.

The Senator from Rhode Island.